In the Poona division the figures include 29 cases which were time-barred under the six weeks' rule referred to in paragraph 75 of last year's report : 86 such cases escaped in the year preceding. The classification of the present 29 is as under :—

(*a*)	Injury to forest by fire ...	1
(*b*)	Illicit cuttings	8
(*c*)	Cattle-trespass	19
(*d*)	Other offences	1
	Total ...	29

A clasification of all the warned cases reads thus :—

No.	Division.	Classification of offences.				Total.
		Fires.	Illicit cuttings.	Cattle-trespass.	Other offences.	
1	East Khándesh ...	...	18	274	59	351
2	West Khándesh ...	2	4	6	44	56
3	Násik	1	81	826	13	921
4	Ahmednagar ...	...	54	2,466	2	2,522
5	Poona	8	168	1,628	16	1,820
6	Sátára	23	126	2,682	63	2,894
7	Sholápur	...	...	1,785	...	1,785
	Total ...	34	454	9,667	197	10,349

61. It will be seen from the returns given above that the total number of offences detected is 14,878 against 13,201 of the year before, the tale is not a heavy one considering that it concerns a forest area of 6,317 square miles spread over 38,390 square miles of country included in 7 divisions ; the percentage of prosecutions on the detected cases is 11·5. Forest crime is practically confined to illicit grazing, petty thefts and firing forests through culpable negligence in the use of fire. The score of serious cases of stealing timber during the year does not run into double figures.

The Collector of Khándesh in forwarding the Administration Reports of the East and West Khándesh divisions remarks on the head of forest offences with reference to the former, " Prosecutions have more than doubled. But the number is still not large for such an extensive forest area :" and with reference to the latter, " Prosecutions increased slightly, but are still decidedly small in proportion to the area of Forests :" and so it is everywhere. Illicit grazing is the habit of the country, and the Forest Department does not suffer more under this evil than the private owners and occupiers of land do.

Protection from Fire.

62. The results of " Fire Conservancy " compared with those of the year preceding are exhibited in the statement :—

No.	Division.	Forest area placed under protection against fire in Acres.		Acreage burned.		Percentage burned.		Expenditure incurred in Rupees.	
		1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.
								Rs.	Rs.
1	East Khándesh ...	5,19,285	5,19,145	15,611	44,544	3·0	8·5	300	93
2	West Khándesh ...	11,03,502	11,03,953	89,735	1,38,981	8·1	12·5	1,036	769
3	Násik	8,18,701	8,18,975	5,141	8,119	0·6	0·9	97	216
4	Ahmednagar ...	5,42,030	5,42,895	1,104	2,445	0·2	0·4	3	...
5	Poona	4,54,917	4,57,025	5,293	7,239	1·1	1·5	611	921
6	Sátára	4,25,790	4,32,034	3,927	3,635	0·9	0·8	11	37
7	Sholápur	1,78,041	1,77,910	457	413	0·2	0·2	48	...
	Total ...	40,42,266	40,51,937	1,21,328	2,05,376	3·0	5·0	2,106	2,036

63. The area traversed by fire during the year amounted to 205,376 acres or 5 per cent. of the total forest area in charge of the Forest Department against 3 per cent. of the area burnt last year. This slight difference of 2 in the percentage burnt is due to the fact that the year of this report was a drier one, and the vegetation in the forests was more inflammable in consequence. A complete report regarding every fire was drawn up and submitted to the Conservator by the Divisional Forest Officer, and thus the proceedings of all parties, who were responsible for the occurrence of forest fires, came under close scrutiny. It will thus be seen that fire conservancy management has been receiving considerable attention. Rules under Section 25 (*b*) of the Indian Forest Act have been issued during the year by which the act of kindling a fire in the vicinity of forests, without adopting adequate safeguards against its spread into forest limits, becomes a forest offence; and this will no doubt lessen the danger of forests being burnt by the careless lighting of ráb in fields adjoining forest.

64. In the East Khándesh division there occurred in all 57 different fires, one of which in the Sávda Sátpudas swept over 15,000 acres. The Divisional Forest Officer reports that the privilege-holders in these parts did not turn out in sufficient numbers to render assistance at the call of village officers and forest subordinates, and the matter is under consideration by the Collector: out of 57 cases, offenders were traced in 10, of which 8 were prosecuted and 2 compounded. The usual measures for the prevention of forest fires, *viz.*, of burning fire traces on the outer boundaries, and on the sides of high ways, and round camping grounds, were undertaken. The total expenditure incurred under this head in this division amounted to Rs. 93.

65. Ninety-five forest fires broke out in the West Khándesh Division. In 11 cases the offenders were caught and were prosecuted, and convictions followed. Almost all the ranges were visited by forest fires, and the Divisional Forest Officer thinks that the area burnt has been underestimated by the Range Forest Officers. An expenditure of Rs. 767 was incurred on fire protection.

66. In the Násik Division 69 forest fires were reported against 112 in the year preceding, the area burnt by them being 8,119 acres against 5,141 during 1893-94; and although there was a decrease in the number of fires, still one fire alone in the Kalvan range burnt 2,432 acres. Offenders were prosecuted in 7 cases, and the originator of the Kalvan fire was sentenced to 20 days' rigorous imprisonment. The usual fire precautions were adopted, and an expenditure of Rs. 216 was incurred.

67. In the ranges of Akola, Karjat and Párner of the Ahmednagar division forest fires were more prevalent than elsewhere, and although exactly the same number, 60 fires, occurred as last year, still they spread over 1,341 acres more than they did then.

68. In the Poona division the number of forest fires increased from 161 to 184. The ranges in which large areas were burnt were Haveli, Junnar and Mával. The usual precautions by burning fire paths were taken, and prompt intimation of the occurrence of fires was given to the Revenue authorities, and to the Divisional Forest Officer, by Forest guards by means of post-cards. Offenders were detected in 22 cases, out of these 15 were prosecuted, and 7 warned. The cause of the fires in the majority of cases is due to carelessness in burning ráb in localities adjoining forests. In consequence of repeated fires in certain villages of the Junnar and Sirur ranges, warnings have been issued by the Collector and District Magistrate to the people that if such fires continue, grazing and other privileges will be suspended. The total expenditure for fire protection amounted to Rs. 921.

69. A smaller area has been burnt in the Sátára division: 91 fires occurred against 117 of last year. In 27 cases offenders were discovered, of these 12 were let off with a warning as they were either small boys or old women, and 15 prosecutions were instituted, at the end of the year 9 convictions and 3 acquittals were recorded leaving 3 cases pending; 168 miles of fire traces were burnt by Forest Guards.

70. In the Sholápur division there were 16 forest fires in all against 14 in the year before, and although there were two fires more than the previous year, still the area burnt was less; of these 16 fires no less than 6 occurred along the Railway lines caused by sparks or burning substances thrown from trains, and 2 by sudden wind springing up while fire tracing was being done. In one case an offender was caught, prosecuted and convicted; and in seven the origin could not be traced. No expenditure was incurred under *A. VIII. f* in this division.

71. The Collector of Khándesh in forwarding the Administration Report of the East Khándesh Division remarks :—

"The figures given for forest fires would show that less than ten per cent. of the protected area was burnt—an estimate which, considering how much one hears of fires, would appear to be too favourable :"

and in forwarding that of the West Khándesh Division he writes :—

"As regards protection of forests from fire it does not seem that things are improving. The whole subject is a very difficult and disheartening one. In the case of some jungle that is burnt from end to end regularly every year the experiment might be tried of setting fire to it in half a dozen places early in the season when the greater part of the grass is still too damp to burn and letting the fire spread as it chooses. If a sufficiently early date were chosen the fire might then run only along the ridges where the grass was short and dry: the longer coarser grass in the intervening valleys might not catch fire: if this were so, then the different valleys would thenceforth be separated from each other by these natural fire traces, so that if later in the season one or more valleys did catch fire the chances of the fire spreading to the others would be reduced. I propose this only for some forest that consists of a series of valleys: and a forest that is morally certain to be burnt in the course of the year whether we set fire to it or not. If a forest is destined to take fire in any case it seems better that it should take fire at that season when the fire can do least harm."

72. The Collector of Ahmednagar in forwarding the report remarks :—

"Notwithstanding the increase in area burnt it bears a very insignificant proportion to the total forest area protected and the results cannot be called very unsatisfactory if any reliance can be placed on the estimate."

73. The Collector of Poona in forwarding the Divisional Forest Officer's report remarks :—

"The increase in fires is to be deplored, but most of them apparently were accidental. Formerly they were in very many cases intentional, and there is every reason to hope that gradually the cultivators will learn to be more careful in their ráb-burning."

(3).—*Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.*

74. Grazing arrangements were the same as last year, *viz.*, regulated under the rules published by Government in their Resolution No. 3595, dated 23rd May 1890, in the Revenue Department; and the following statement shows the areas closed and open to grazing during the year in the several divisions of the Central Circle :—

No.	Division.	Closed.	Open.	Total.
		Sq. m.	Sq. m.	Sq. m.
1	East Khándesh	60	747	807
2	West Khándesh	363	1,359	1,722
3	Násik	553	727	1,280
4	Ahmednagar	294	553	847
5	Poona	367	344	711
6	Sátára	143	529	672
7	Sholápur	171	107	278
	Total ...	1,951	4,366	6,317

75. The number of cattle impounded for trespassing in closed forest reservations and for grazing in open forests without passes was 337,918 against 294,769 in the year preceding, and the following statement shows the different